

# District 25 News

MAKIKI, TANTALUS, MCCULLY, PAPAOLEA

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2008

## The Shortlist

### Rebroadcast KGMB9 / The Honolulu Advertiser Debate

#### "Campaign 2008: The Hawaii ConCon"

All on Channel 49 (Olelo)

10/28/08	Tue	9:30 am
10/29/08	Wed	9:00 am
10/30/08	Thu	11:30 am
10/31/08	Fri	11:30 am
11/2/08	Sun	11:30 am

### ConCon Discussion Forums

A series of discussions on the challenges and opportunities offered by Hawaii's next possible ConCon on the areas of Native Hawaiian Affairs, Education, and Environment, Land Use, Water, as well as a retrospective by 1978 ConCon veterans (delegates and reporters). Discussion videos may be viewed on Olelo at [www.olelo.org](http://www.olelo.org).

### Aloha Aina Earth Day

#### Recycling & Community Service Projects

Join students, teachers and staff for another annual Aloha Aina recycling project to benefit our community. Containers and trucks will be at the school site to accept recyclable material. Volunteers will also be available to assist customers who bring their recyclables to the drop-off sites.

Call Rene Mansho at 306-1876 to volunteer or for more information.

McKinley High School

Saturday, November 1

McKinley High School Pensacola Street parking lot

@ 8:00am—2:00pm

## District 25 News

To comment on something written in *District 25 News* or to request regular e-delivery, please write to:

Representative Della Au Belatti  
State Capitol, Room 331  
Honolulu, HI 96813  
[repbelatti@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:repbelatti@capitol.hawaii.gov)



## Aloha Neighbors!

During the last presidential debate, moderator Bob Schieffer shared the following:

"I will leave you tonight with what my mother always said—  
Go vote now. It will make you feel big and strong."

In that same vein, whether it's early or on Election Day, I strongly urge you to go to the polls and cast your vote so that your voice is heard.

Mahalo pumehana,

Della Au Belatti  
State Representative, District 25

Above photo—KGMB Studio (October 14, 2008)—from L to R—State Attorney General Mark Bennett, Representative Della Au Belatti, Dr. Anne Feder Lee, Senate President Colleen Hanabusa, and KGMB producer Chris Archer go over the evening's format for "Campaign 2008: The Hawaii ConCon", a live on-air and streaming online debate on the pros and cons of Hawaii's next Constitutional Convention. The debate and live broadcast was presented by KGMB9 and The Honolulu Advertiser and sponsored by Hawaii Institute for Public Affairs and League of Women Voters of Hawaii.

Watch the debate and the post-debate web cast online at [www.KGMB9.com](http://www.KGMB9.com). Rebroadcast schedule listed in *The Shortlist* above.

# 2008 COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS


Mahalo to each you who returned this year's community survey to my office with your ideas for our state's priorities. Over 3,400 surveys were distributed with the February and March editions of *District 25 News*, via US mail, community drop sites, and e-delivery. Ninety-four respondents, or roughly 2.8% of the total survey distributed, answered 14 questions on Education, Environment, Housing, the OHA Settlement, and Hawaii's Constitutional Convention.

Respondents could select varying degrees of approval or disapproval for each legislative proposal by selecting 1 of 5 possible answers: strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, strongly oppose or no opinion.

Approximately 2-7% of respondents for each question provided no answer. In tallying and reviewing the survey results, we considered "no answer" as a separate response from "no opinion", but combined their numbers to report these results.


And although survey respondents had the opportunity to provide additional comments at the end of the survey, many decided to include their added comments with each question.

The full survey form and questions may be found in the February and March 2008 issues of "District 25 News" and downloaded from Rep. Belatti's Majority Caucus webpage at [http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hsemaj/belatti\\_della.html](http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hsemaj/belatti_della.html). Survey comments may be edited for clarity or space constraints or to combine a number of persons' comments on the same issue. Not all comments could be included in the survey results.

 **Higher vehicle taxes for cars that have low mile-per gallon/high fuel consumption**

**70% FAVOR**  
**24% DISFAVOR**  
**5% NO OPINION and NO ANSWER**


Comments were generally in favor of making owners of heavy, large vehicles pay more in taxes for choosing fuel inefficient vehicles and/or for the damage caused to the environment and city infrastructure.

 **Legislation that creates a recycling program for electronic waste disposal**

**89% FAVOR**  
**5% DISFAVOR**  
**5% NO OPINION and NO ANSWER**


Comments included a suggestion that manufacturers should be required to have recycling programs of their own.



 **Utilizing state funds to build affordable housing**


**79% FAVOR**  
**26% DISFAVOR**  
**4% NO OPINION and NO ANSWER**

Additional thoughts by respondents included that state funded housing should be kept for low-income earners only, the state should be building affordable housing already, and tax incentives should be used to spur private development.

 **Passing anti-real speculation estate laws**

**65% FAVOR**  
**18% DISFAVOR**  
**18% NO OPINION and NO ANSWER**

Comments included a request for more details.

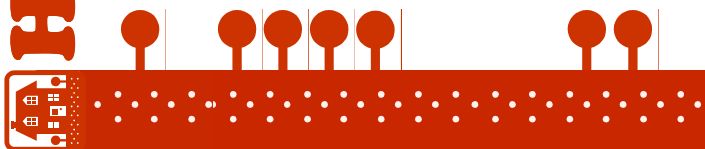
 **Stricter regulation of Bed and Breakfast ("B&B") establishments**


**61% FAVOR**  
**21% DISFAVOR**  
**16% NO OPINION and NO ANSWER**

Comments reflected different attitudes towards B&Bs and their regulation—must have stricter enforcement of B&B laws, B&Bs are used by local residents for more affordable island vacations, and although one respondent preferred to limit residential density, this person also wanted to keep them.

## Housing


The following ideas were proposals to alleviate the lack of affordable housing and rental units in Hawaii:



 **Excess funds generated by the HI-5¢ Bottle Redemption Program be given to county governments to facilitate the recycling programs in the respective counties**

**80% FAVOR**  
**9% DISFAVOR**  
**10% NO OPINION and NO ANSWER**

A number of respondents indicated with their comments that there should not be a surplus in program funds. Suggestions ranged from reducing the bottle surcharge to eliminate excess funds, to increasing the redemption amount to encourage more recycling, and ending the program all together.

 **All new state buildings should be built "green" by using photovoltaic cells to reduce energy consumption or "environmentally friendly" technology to cool buildings**

**94% FAVOR**  
**3% DISFAVOR**  
**3% NO OPINION and NO ANSWER**

Respondents went further and offered ideas such as retrofitting all state buildings with solar/ photo-voltaic technology and requiring all government employees to practice "green" living [with regard to office energy consumption and waste].

## ENVIRONMENT





Affordable housing should be a requirement for all new developments

**75% FAVOR**

**18% DISFAVOR**

**7% NO OPINION and NO ANSWER**

Comments included ideas like ensuring that units are kept affordable after their purchase, making 35% of all new housing affordable, and reserving affordable housing for Hawaii residents. One respondent suggesting keeping “the burden [of building affordable housing] on profit makers”, and another commented against rent control, as it has always created substandard housing and slums.



## Other Questions

### ✕ OHA Settlement

Proposed \$200 million settlement for ceded land revenues still in dispute

**47% FAVOR**

**17% DISFAVOR**

**37% NO OPINION and NO ANSWER**

One respondent stated that OHA did not solicit input from the Hawaiian community, nor provide enough information for the public to decide if it was a fair settlement.

### ✕ ConCon

Convening a constitutional convention

**35% FAVOR**

**45% DISFAVOR**

**20% NO OPINION and NO ANSWER**

Comments covered a range of attitudes from a neutral request for more information; to statements against—warning against opening the door to outside, special interests; to simple support—this generation needs a fresh perspective.

## Comment Box

### ✕ Energy & Environment

- We need curbside recycling and more bike lanes.
- State should encourage the production and use of bio-diesel. Bio-diesel can create a new industry that is carbon neutral.

### ✕ Hawaiian Affairs

- OHA and Kamehameha Schools should help provide housing for any and all homeless Hawaiians.
- The previous 2 administrations tried to resolve the issue with OHA, but none have successfully negotiated the settlement until now. To settle the pro-rata share of income and proceeds from the ceded lands is a step in the right direction. Other issues regarding the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom and unjust use of ceded lands income etc. should be handled separately.

### ✕ Makiki/Public & Pedestrian Safety

- When is the Makiki Library reopening?
- Crime, gangs, drugs, graffiti and vandalism seem to be increasing, and nobody is doing anything about it.
- Current jaywalking laws and fines are harsh and cruel to the elderly.
- Population density is increasing in Makiki and...street noise will be higher.... But excessive noise from motorcycle/mopeds with altered exhaust systems can be avoided.

### ✕ Miscellaneous

- Surplus money the state receives for collecting the transit tax should be kept, and used towards rail transit needs such as road improvements.
- Pass a cap on litigation settlements and attorney fees.

Publicly funded pre-school programs

**71% FAVOR**

**23% DISFAVOR**

**5% NO OPINION and NO ANSWER**

Despite a strong show of support, those who provided additional comments were consistent in their dissatisfaction with the current public education system and lacked confidence in the effectiveness of a new public pre-school program.

Additional funding for University of Hawaii facilities

**81% FAVOR**

**11% DISFAVOR**

**8% NO OPINION and NO ANSWER**

Respondents commented on the need for transparency of funding and to hold university leadership accountable.

Making geographic exceptions easier so students have more freedom in their choice of school, specifically within an educational system looking to create smaller learning communities that focus on various fields such as science, engineering, math and construction

**81% FAVOR**

**13% DISFAVOR**

**5% NO OPINION and NO ANSWER**

Tax incentive or deduction program for parents that participate in a college savings program, like HI-529

**87% FAVOR**

**5% DISFAVOR**

**7% NO OPINION and NO ANSWER**

One respondent suggested that the deduction should be made after tuition is paid and student classes have been completed, and another asked for more information about HI-529.

# EDUCATION



**James R. "Duke" Aiona, Jr.**  
Lieutenant Governor

The state constitution must evolve with the times. That is why the founders of our state recognized the importance of maintaining a living, evolving constitution when they incorporated a provision that calls for a constitutional convention every 10 years. After 30 years since our last Con Con, it is time to take a fresh look at modernizing the constitution.

A constitutional convention, by its very nature, takes our democracy back to the people. I believe our citizens are best suited to decide the future of our state.

Out of the 102 publicly elected delegates in our last constitutional convention, only seven were public officials. That is civic involvement at its finest.

Our citizens will have the opportunity to pass sunshine laws to hold state government accountable, put forward public initiatives and referendums to bypass a political system under the influence of special interests and give local communities say over the quality of their children's education and the type of services they receive. Strengthening environmental safeguards, protecting agricultural lands, advancing energy independence and term limits are all within reach of our citizens—if they vote in favor of a ConCon.

**YES!**

I led an 11-member, nonpartisan task force, which included Sen. Hooser, to study the cost of convening a constitutional convention and provide the public with credible and accurate information in advance of its decision. According to the final report, our citizens can hold a fair, effective and inclusive convention for under \$10 million. I encourage all of our residents to go to [hawaii.gov/lsgov/concon](http://hawaii.gov/lsgov/concon) to see the report for themselves.

I believe our citizens want to have a say in their future. In November, our citizens have a choice: maintain the status quo or vote for real change. We must not fear ourselves. I trust our citizens will make the right decision, and vote in favor of a constitutional convention.

**Gary L. Hooser**  
State Senate, Majority Leader

Constitutions are written as enduring documents reflecting the core values of the society that they are intended to govern. They serve as the stable and secure foundations upon which our laws are built. Given our constitution's central role in establishing and preserving the functions of our government, changes should be made rarely and with great caution. Amendments that the community sees as truly essential can be proposed relatively easily through an established legislative process.

The question before us, then, is whether Hawaii's constitution is in need of a major overhaul. Current conditions do not warrant such broad changes; I have yet to hear from anyone who can point to a spectrum of issues that calls for deep and immediate action at the constitutional level. Nor does our constitution deserve the wholesale assault that is sure to come should a constitutional convention be convened.

The conservative voices clamoring loudest for a constitutional convention are those seeking not to expand the rights and protections we hold as fundamental expressions of our values, but rather to diminish them. Under the guise of free enterprise, well-financed special interests will seek to limit or eliminate many of those provisions we view as central to our way of life, including the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and the Land Use Commission.

**NO!**

In a time when our state budget encounters increasing economic pressures and our schools and health systems are facing significant cutbacks, it makes no sense to spend millions of dollars on a constitutional convention when there is no pressing need. Those issues most in need of attention in our state—healthcare, education, housing, traffic and crime—are more likely to benefit from additional funding than from constitutional amendments.

We don't need a constitutional convention. We can put the money one would cost to better uses. And we run too great a risk of our state constitution suffering lasting damage at the hands of special interests. We should vote "no" on Con Con.

## Does Hawaii Need a Con Con?

As part of the general election this November, Hawaii voters will decide whether to hold a constitutional convention to revise the state constitution. Hawaii has not had a constitutional convention since 1978; if approved, the next would be held in 2010. Should our state hold a Con Con?

*Both commentaries were published in HONOLULU Magazine in the September 2008 issue, and are reprinted with express permission from HONOLULU Magazine. Visit [honoluluimagazine.com](http://honoluluimagazine.com) to view the original articles.*